



HIKING – FOREST SERVICE – ROCKY MOUNTAIN REGION  
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

NATIONAL FOREST – San Juan RANGER DISTRICT - Columbine

Updated: February, 2003

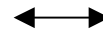


**Columbine Lake Trail #509**

Length: 5 miles (8 km.)

**Recommended Season**

Spring Summer Fall Winter



**Use:** Light

**Difficulty:** Most difficult

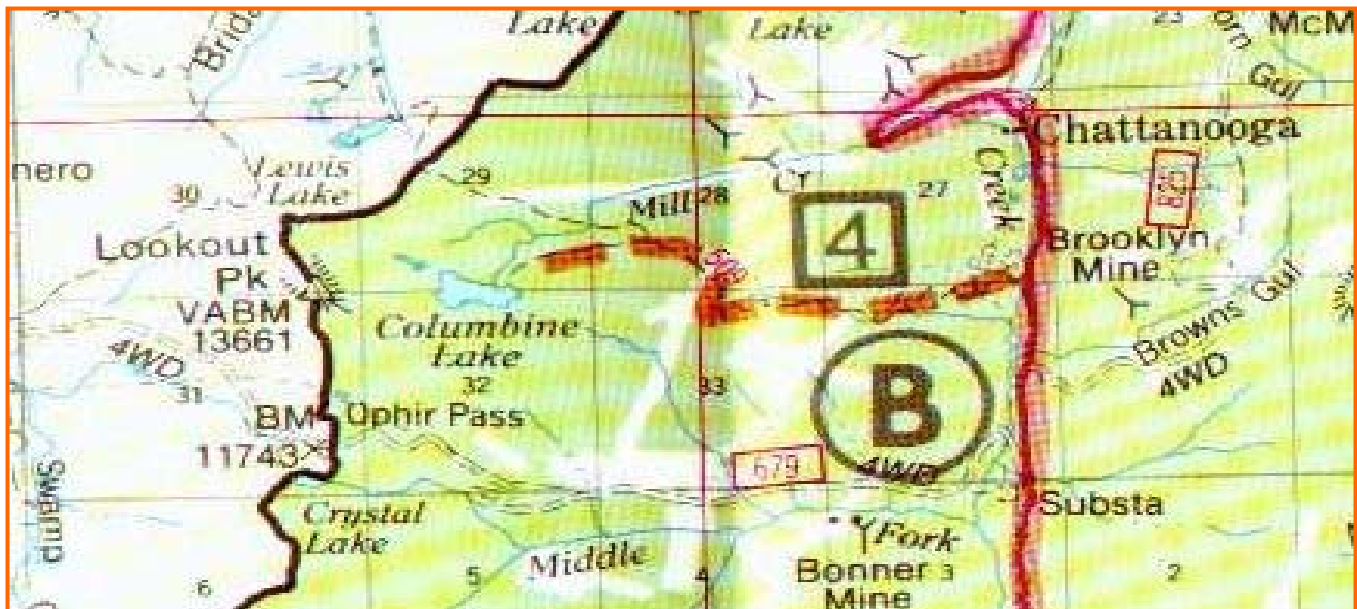
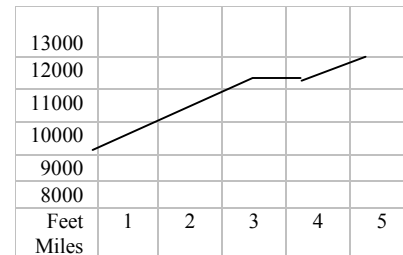
**USGS Map (s):** Ophir and Silverton

**Starting Elevation:** 10,200'

Mineral Creek

**Ending Elevation:** 12,800'

Columbine Lake



**Recommended Season:** Summer.

Open to motorized vehicles.

**Access # 1:** (Ophir Pass Road) Approximately 57 miles north of Durango on Hwy 550, turn off on Ophir Pass Road. Follow this down across Mineral Creek and back left until you come to a turn to the right. Parking is best here, since parking at the immediate trailhead is limited. Follow this old mining road about 1 mile north to the unmarked trail on the left.

**Other Access :** For the strong hiker and experienced route finder, there are a few other access points: Bridal Veil Basin, Ophir Pass, and Porphyry Basin.

**Attractions & Considerations:** This "secret" spot is frequented only by a few locals, due to its isolated location and difficult access. The trail consists of many steep switchbacks, and then eases out into the basin below Columbine Lake. Water is fairly scarce, but it is there. A few camp spots are also there, and tents should be moved if you plan to stay more than two days, because of the fragile tundra. A trout dinner is a consideration for the fishing fan. Only experienced mountaineers should climb the surrounding peaks.



**Fishing Considerations:**

Columbine Lake is rated good for brook trout. The lake is at 12,685 feet and is 21.7 acres.

*Scan of the San Juan National Forest Map*  
Forest Service Maps and other publications available at the Public Lands Center in the Durango Tech Center, ½ mile west of Durango off of Highway 160 or by calling 970-247-4874. [www.sjma.org](http://www.sjma.org)